



**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

WASHINGTON 25, D. C. 20505

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

27 February 1967

Honorable John W. Macy, Jr.  
Executive Secretary  
President's Distinguished Civilian  
Service Awards Board  
U.S. Civil Service Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20415

Dear Mr. Macy:

Thank you for your letter, on behalf of the Distinguished Service Awards Board, inviting me to submit nominations for the 1967 President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service.

I welcome the opportunity to nominate Dr. Sherman Kent, Director of National Estimates and Chairman of the National Intelligence Estimates Board in the Central Intelligence Agency. I believe that Dr. Kent's achievements in the development and improvement of the National Intelligence Estimate and his outstanding service in the intelligence community of the United States merit greater public recognition than can be accorded by the Central Intelligence Agency. He has made most significant contributions to this Agency and has had a major role in elevating the production of intelligence into a highly specialized profession.

The security considerations surrounding Dr. Kent's achievements limit my freedom to go into detail in the enclosed document, and I would appreciate the privilege of having one of our senior officers brief members of the Board on Dr. Kent's contributions.

Six copies of the nomination documents, required for the Board's review, are enclosed.

Sincerely,

Richard Helms  
Director

STATINTL

CITATION

SHERMAN KENT

A distinguished scholar, who has been a creative pioneer in the theory and practice of foreign intelligence for almost a quarter century, he has played a unique role in establishing and improving the contribution of intelligence to our national security.

Chairman of the Board of National Estimates for more than fifteen years, his intellectual courage and integrity, human warmth and wit, drive and dedication, have made him an inspiring leader in the intelligence community, and a key lieutenant to five successive Directors of Central Intelligence.

### Summary of Achievements

1. Developer of the National Intelligence Estimate. For some 15 years Dr. Kent has been chiefly responsible for developing the unique institution of the Board of National Estimates and its Staff, and for the production of more than a thousand National Intelligence Estimates. Under his leadership the system for preparing these papers has progressed from its precarious and experimental beginning in 1950 to a smoothly working and responsive operation, in which the resources of the entire intelligence community are effectively brought to bear on critical questions relating to national security. The Estimates have come to be accepted by the highest officials as objective and authoritative judgments. The estimating art is also manifest in hundreds of other, less formal, documents prepared by the Office of National Estimates at the request of policy-making officials of Cabinet level.

2. Teacher and Theoretician of the Modern Intelligence Profession. Dr. Kent has played a uniquely creative and innovative role in the development of intelligence as a sophisticated modern profession with its own rigorous disciplines. His book, Strategic Intelligence, published in 1949, remains the best single work on the subject; it has been translated into several foreign languages. In 1955 he established a quarterly professional journal, Studies in Intelligence, and has guided this publication ever since. By stimulating contributions to this periodical, as well as in a multitude of informal contacts, he has encouraged his colleagues throughout the intelligence community to think and write about the larger meaning of what they are doing, why it is being done, and how it could be done better. The Studies must of necessity be a classified publication, and in the nature of things little of Dr. Kent's professional influence can come to public notice.

### Additional Details

1. More than twenty years ago the United States government recognized a need for coordinated foreign intelligence--coordinated in the collection and evaluation of material, the analysis of what was collected, and finally in the formulation of the important intelligence judgments to be derived from it. The Office of National Estimates was established in 1950 to conduct this ultimate part of the intelligence process. It represented a new experiment, without precedent in the United States or abroad.

2. National Intelligence Estimates must necessarily be evolved from complex, incomplete, and ambiguous masses of information susceptible to differing interpretations. They often involve issues on which departmental interests vigorously conflict. In preparing these papers such differences must be reconciled where reconciliation is intellectually defensible, and, when it is not, the dissents must be crisply defined for the information of the policy-maker. For the process to gain acceptance the Director of National Estimates had to establish for himself and his Office a reputation for high competence, integrity respected even by adversaries, patience, courage, and good will. Dr. Kent has met this requirement with notable success. His rigorous intellectual standards and complete honesty, together with his remarkable human warmth, wit, and common sense, are very largely responsible for the success of the enterprise.

3. The Board of National Estimates, of which Dr. Kent is Chairman, has numbered among its members distinguished academicians, career ambassadors, and military officers of the highest rank. The prestige of the Board has contributed substantially to the standing of National Estimates; it is a mark of Dr. Kent's qualities that he has attracted these men to serve as his colleagues, and that they have retained their confidence in him and their enthusiasm for the work.

4. Dr. Kent's proven professional competence and personal qualities have made him a key advisor to five successive Directors of Central Intelligence.

#### Benefits

1. The value of the National Intelligence Estimate is that it provides for the policy-maker in a single document the judgment of the entire intelligence community on a given situation or issue in foreign affairs. The policy-maker may or may not agree with the judgment; at least he knows that it is the result of a great deal of informed thought and argument. These papers are now frequently requested by the President or by members of the White House Staff, or by the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense or their assistants, or by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among other things, they are accepted as final authority on the strengths and capabilities of the Soviet and Chinese Communist military forces; this fact alone demonstrates that they have become an indispensable input to the policy-making process.

2. No inventory of benefits to government from Dr. Kent's career would be complete without reference to the many contributions which he has made in the capacities of Elder Statesman, Keeper of the Conscience, Apostle to Academia, and generally humanizing influence in the intelligence bureaucracy. In countless tangible and intangible ways going beyond the call of duty, his extraordinary energy, uncompromising standards, personal kindness and concern, and high standing in the universities have been employed to get things done that should be done, to resist what should be resisted, and to oil the wheels of the formidable intelligence bureaucracy.

#### Awards

Dr. Kent was awarded the National Civil Service League Career Award in 1961 and was cited for his distinguished service in the development of the Central Intelligence Agency and of intelligence as a profession.